

AB 2276 – OZONE: INDOOR AIR CLEANING DEVICES

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IN BRIEF

Many indoor air cleaners marketed as “air purifiers” intentionally emit large amounts of ozone, a criteria air pollutant that is linked to lung illnesses, asthma attacks, hospitalizations and premature deaths. These devices are not only ineffective in cleaning the air, they actually do tremendous harm by producing elevated levels of ozone.

This bill would give the California Air Resources Board regulatory authority over indoor air cleaning devices to protect public health. While the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and other agencies have tried to warn the public about this problem, no agency has clear authority to control ozone emissions from devices.

AB 2276 would specifically require the California Air Resources Board to develop and adopt state regulations to reduce emissions of ozone from non-commercial indoor air cleaning devices by July 31, 2007. The regulations would include emissions standards for ozone from air cleaning devices; a ban on the sale of higher emitting devices, and requirements for public disclosure of information on ozone levels emitted from air cleaning devices.

THE ISSUE

The California Air Resources Board (CARB), the State Department of Health Services, and other governmental agencies have issued warnings to advise the public not to use air cleaning devices that are specifically designed to generate ozone indoors due to health concerns. Acting CARB Chairperson Barbara Riordan stated in a 2005 press release, “These machines are insidious. Marketed as a strong

defense against indoor air pollution, they emit ozone, the same chemical that the ARB and US EPA have been trying to eliminate from our air for decades.”

According to recent studies, ozone-generating air cleaning devices have produced levels of ozone up to three times the state outdoor air quality standard within an hour or two of operation. If produced outdoors, these levels would be equal to a stage-one smog alert. If these devices were left running constantly in a home, individuals could be exposed to stage-one smog alert levels on a 24 hour basis. Unfortunately, most of the people who buy these devices suffer from a respiratory condition and are especially sensitive to increased ozone levels.

Ozone used at safe levels is not effective in cleaning indoor air. Studies have demonstrated that ozone-generating air cleaning devices do not destroy microbes or reduce indoor air pollutants effectively enough to provide any health benefits. The market for indoor air cleaning devices has increased in recent years, and is expected to continue to expand. Given the health concerns about ozone generated from many indoor air cleaning devices, it is important for the state to adopt regulations to curb ozone emissions.

More information is available on ozone-generating indoor air cleaners including a list of over 20 products that generate high ozone levels at:
<http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/indoor/ozone.htm>.

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EXISTING LAW

No state agency has existing authority to regulate ozone from indoor air cleaning devices. AB 1173 (Keeley- Chapter 987, Statutes of 2002) required the California Air Resources Board to submit a report to the Legislature summarizing the best available scientific information on indoor air pollution, the potential adverse effects of indoor air pollution on public health in California, and mitigation options. The report developed pursuant to AB 1173 (Indoor Air Pollution In California, Report To The Legislature, July 2005) found that indoor air cleaning devices are in the high priority category of indoor air pollution sources for mitigation, and suggests emission limitations as the mitigation approach.

The federal Food and Drug Administration has regulations that limit ozone emissions from air cleaners sold as health products, however these regulations have not been effective in resolving the problem.

SUPPORT

The American Lung Association of California
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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